

INTRODUCTION BY RICK WARREN

CELEBRATE
RECOVERY

30

ANNIVERSARY

Your First Step to
Celebrate
Recovery[®]

HOW GOD CAN HEAL YOUR LIFE

JOHN BAKER

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

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Your First Step to Celebrate Recovery

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Principles That Will Change Your Life

The Road to Recovery

Based on the Beatitudes

Pastor Rick Warren

PRINCIPLE 1	R ealize I'm not God. I admit that I am powerless to control my tendency to do the wrong thing and that my life is unmanageable (Step 1). <i>"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor" (Matthew 5:3).</i>
PRINCIPLE 2	E arnestly believe that God exists, that I matter to Him, and that He has the power to help me recover (Step 2). <i>"Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" (Matthew 5:4).</i>
PRINCIPLE 3	C onsciously choose to commit all my life and will to Christ's care and control (Step 3). <i>"Happy are the meek" (Matthew 5:5).</i>
PRINCIPLE 4	O penly examine and confess my faults to myself, to God, and to someone I trust (Steps 4 and 5). <i>"Happy are the pure in heart" (Matthew 5:8).</i>
PRINCIPLE 5	V oluntarily submit to every change God wants to make in my life and humbly ask Him to remove my character defects (Steps 6 and 7). <i>"Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires" (Matthew 5:6).</i>
PRINCIPLE 6	E valuate all my relationships. Offer forgiveness to those who have hurt me and make amends for harm I've done to others, except when to do so would harm them or others (Steps 8 and 9). <i>"Happy are the merciful" (Matthew 5:7). "Happy are the peacemakers" (Matthew 5:9).</i>
PRINCIPLE 7	R eserve a daily time with God for self-examination, Bible reading, and prayer in order to know God and His will for my life and to gain the power to follow His will (Steps 10 and 11).
PRINCIPLE 8	Y ield myself to God to be used to bring this Good News to others, both by my example and by my words (Step 12). <i>"Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires" (Matthew 5:10).</i>

TWELVE STEPS AND THEIR BIBLICAL COMPARISONS

1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors, that our lives had become unmanageable.

"I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out."
(Romans 7:18)

2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

"For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose." (Philippians 2:13)

3. We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship." (Romans 12:1)

4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

"Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD." (Lamentations 3:40)

5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." (James 5:16)
6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." (James 4:10)
7. We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.
"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
"Do to others as you would have them do to you." (Luke 6:31)
9. We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:23–24)
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
"So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" (1 Corinthians 10:12)
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.
"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." (Colossians 3:16)
12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
"Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted." (Galatians 6:1)

Appendix B

HOW GOD HAS CHANGED MY LIFE THROUGH CELEBRATE RECOVERY

Allen R.—Celebrate Recovery is a mirror that allows me to see the things in my life that God wants to change.

Mary L.—Celebrate Recovery has taught me compassion, and with compassion came my healing.

Cory R.—Celebrate Recovery allowed me to finally see the woman of God I was designed to be!

Mark Z.—Before I was eating out of dumpsters. Now, with Celebrate Recovery, I'm living on God's Word.

Jeanne P.—Four years ago, I walked into my first Celebrate Recovery fellowship with fears and doubt. Through this blessed program, I have gained a stronger grasp on God's plan for my life.

Cheyenne S.—I started going to support my son but quickly found that God had much more planned! I've been in Celebrate

Recovery almost a year and have been healed with many, many blessings.

Wynette C. — I came to Celebrate Recovery a day after attempting suicide. I remember going up to get a blue chip, ready to surrender a life of drug abuse, depression, and suicide attempts. I stood before people whose eyes were focused on me, not with that usual judgmental stare but with a look of love and compassion. When I took that chip and sat down, it felt as though the weight of the world had been lifted off of my shoulders. At Celebrate Recovery I found love, acceptance, and sincere concern not only for my mental and physical well-being, but also for my spiritual well-being.

Yvette M. — Celebrate Recovery helps me with every aspect of my life!

Sherrie B. — Celebrate Recovery has helped me heal a lot of wounds that years of counseling could not heal. Because of Celebrate Recovery I have become a better mother and wife!

Sarah B. — I grew up in church and I've always known that God was the answer to my problems, but I was so bound by my hang-ups and struggles that I couldn't find peace. Celebrate Recovery is completely changing my life! For the first time I have hope and peace, while God is gradually shaping me into the woman He has called me to be.

Julie A. — I never felt "good enough for church," yet I wasn't "bad enough" for AA anymore. After twenty-five years in recovery, Celebrate Recovery brought what I was missing all along—the power of God to heal me.

Terie P. — Celebrate Recovery showed me that no matter how bad or how worthless I thought I was, God still loves me. I also

learned that what people did to me was not my fault, but what I did to people I had to assume responsibility for. No matter how low on the ladder of life I feel, Jesus put me right up on the top rung by His sacrifice for me.

Michael B. — Five years ago I walked into a Celebrate Recovery program hating myself, hating others, and hating God. Today, through the healing and restoring grace of Jesus who I met at Celebrate Recovery, I'm in love with God, in love with the person who He has made me to be, and I'm the ministry leader of a beautiful Forever Family at the very same Celebrate Recovery program I walked into five years ago.

Janet R. — Celebrate Recovery helps me find a way out of the forest life gives me each day and gives me a special way to help hurting people heal!

Mary Beth F. — I worked my Celebrate Recovery steps in prison and when I was released I became a leader and a Sunday school teacher.

Jennifer E. — I first attended Celebrate Recovery to find out how to get and keep my husband sober. After working through a full step study, I realized I had just as much of a need to change. Six years later, he's sober (all through his journey in Celebrate Recovery) and I've worked more and more on my own issues. Today I am able to boast of my weakness and to help lead other women to find truth.

Andrew H. — When I first attended Celebrate Recovery, I didn't believe anything was wrong with me. After all, I had never messed with drugs or alcohol ... what good was a 12-Step program for me? How wrong I was! Anger, lust, codependency ... Celebrate Recovery is helping me allow God to put my life back in order. Thank you, John Baker, for allowing God to do His work through you!

Teresa L.— I had been a Christian for over thirty years, even in positions of leadership but never really experienced true freedom in Christ. After attending Celebrate Recovery and a step study, I was finally able to gain accountability, confess my sins to other godly women, and begin to see healing from codependency, divorce, abuse, and so much more, as things that had been hidden for so many years were finally brought into the light! It's more than a program; it's a way of life, and it works!

Mandi L.— I found Celebrate Recovery before I even knew who God was. Not only was Celebrate Recovery a turning point for my life, it was also a starting point for me to develop my relationship with God and to become a Christian.

Loretta D.— I came from secular recovery looking for a Christ-centered recovery program that could help me grow in my relationship with Christ, find support in maintaining my sobriety, and work on my very present issues of codependency. Celebrate Recovery was home for me!

Julie T.—My life has turned around because of Celebrate Recovery. I have made so many true friends who have encouraged me to do the hard things I had to do, with love and acceptance all the way.

James M.— Celebrate Recovery helps you learn to apply God's Word to the struggles in your own life, just as Jesus did in His temptation. There is power in the Word and Celebrate Recovery teaches you how to apply it.

Malinda C.— Celebrate Recovery helped me see that it doesn't matter where we came from. What matters is where we are going.

Melodie W.— God changed my life through Celebrate Recovery by giving me sisters who understand because they have been

where I have been. Trust and safety, there's no feeling like it in the world. When we're together at meetings, I feel Jesus' arms around us!

Marvin M.—Through Celebrate Recovery, God took a messed-up pastor and gave him a second chance.

Darlene M.—Celebrate Recovery was the open hand I needed to lift me out of the hell of my addiction and into true relationship with God.

Elmer D.—Celebrate Recovery is God with “skin on” for the things we all face today.

Wendy F.—I came to Celebrate Recovery broken and needing healing from abuse in my childhood. Years of counseling touched the surface, but didn't do the deep work that is happening now through a step study. I stay with Celebrate Recovery because it helps me find hope for each day.

Marty K.—I finally realized I mattered to God!

John M.—Thanks to some great people at Celebrate Recovery, I am finally at peace with God and myself. It is an awesome feeling. Today, I have a smile that nothing can take away and I mean—nothing!

Fran H.—Celebrate Recovery works if you work it—and you are worth it!

Diane C.—For eighteen years I kept God in my bookcase on a shelf. I never allowed Him to heal what He so desperately wanted to until I walked through the doors of Celebrate Recovery! Since that day, over five years ago, I have grown in Christ and am loving life as never before! Thank you, God and Pastor John.

Debbie H.— Celebrate Recovery took a very depressed, lonely woman and made her whole again! Me! It was nice to know there were several depressed ladies in my group and by working through the eight principles, we all found victory in Christ. You can find it as well! Praise God!

Jonathan S.— In Celebrate Recovery, I found the power in Jesus Christ to stop doing the things that caused me and my family so much pain.

Marianne S.— Codependency was my life. I hit rock bottom when I found out my husband was having an affair and addicted to porn. Shortly after, we started attending a Celebrate Recovery at our church and my life began to change. Celebrate Recovery gave me tools, strength, family, comfort, and a place where I could feel safe to be myself. I asked that my husband attend with me if he wanted our marriage to work. Celebrate Recovery saved our marriage! We are now ministry leaders and my husband is now a state rep for Celebrate Recovery! This program works and saves lives through God's amazing grace!

Karen R.— Through Celebrate Recovery I found help, healing, and a deeper, restored relationship with God. I've learned boundaries, communication skills, and how to have healthy relationships. I've learned how to trust God and others again. I've learned how to focus on the truth and not the trials. Thank You, God, for Celebrate Recovery.

Sue V.— Before Celebrate Recovery, I was a miserable mess. I was alone and I was an out-of-control glutton. But when I turned my mess completely over to God, He took it, made me new, and turned my mess into a message. Today, I have a life in Christ and a testimony that glorifies God. And rather than an abundance of food, I'm now enjoying an abundant life filled with the fruit of the Spirit. And this fruit—love, joy, peace, and self-control—is far better than any food I ever binged on!

Harry H.— I lived fifty-five years believing that God existed, but was unable to feel a true relationship with Jesus Christ. Through Celebrate Recovery and witnessing the never-ending victories in others' lives, I learned that I AM a son of the King— that He had always been with me and always will be. All I had to do was surrender, and His light warmed my soul and showed me the way to live in Him!

Janet C.— I came to Celebrate Recovery wearing a mask that said, "I'm fine; how can I help you?" Now, four and a half years later, the mask is gone, and I've been healed from past events I thought I'd gotten over. I know I have worth because God loves me just the way I am.

Tim M.— After being stuck in an addiction to pornography for twenty-five years, Celebrate Recovery offered me something that nothing else had ... HOPE!

Micah H.— Through Celebrate Recovery I have found Christ-centered accountability—men of God who support me, confront me, cry with me, and celebrate with me. It is truly "iron sharpening iron" so that we can bring glory to God.

Brenda Y.— God has brought me to my knees through the struggles of my marriage, my codependency, and my husband's sexual addictions. I was ready to run away from the problem and let the wind carry me away. Celebrate Recovery provided a solid foundation to hold on to through my time of need. Praise God for bringing me to my knees; my pride was strong and I was not easily bent. God knows what is best even when I can't see it.

Lynne F.— The hardest part about coming to Celebrate Recovery the first time was getting across the parking lot from my car to the door. But I was welcomed with genuine smiles and love, not pity. The easiest part of coming to Celebrate Recovery is making the decision to keep coming back!

Amber A.— Because of past hurts, I took a detour off the path that God had intended for me. I got lost, hit a few bumps, and got a few cuts and scrapes. Because of God and through Celebrate Recovery, I am no longer lost. My feet are firmly planted back on His path and this time the bumps aren't so bad and the cuts and scrapes don't hurt as much. Thank you, Jesus, and thank you, Celebrate Recovery!

Jeff P.— I found my sobriety in secular recovery, but I kept my sobriety by starting a Celebrate Recovery at my church. Celebrate Recovery showed me what the Bible had to say about recovery and allowed my church to see the healing benefits of a support group ministry.

Ingrid B.— Celebrate Recovery has taught me what true mercy and grace is all about. Though I have been and worked in church most of my life, Celebrate Recovery has shown me what God's true love looks like. It is now my first ministry.

Mary S.— Even though I was full of anxiety walking into Celebrate Recovery that very first time, I was even more anxious that the rest of my life would be the continuing cycle of disappointments, failures, and pain I had experienced so far. Celebrate Recovery has changed my life into one full of joy, hope, peace, and just sheer happiness. To get something I never had, I had to do something I never did— go to Celebrate Recovery!